

fals/Seblant. Ye, sir.
Amour. And how?

fals/Seblant. Sir, I wol gladly telle yow:
Seynt Austyn seith, a man may be
In houses that han propretee,
As templers and hospitellers,
And as these chanouns regulers,
Or whyte monkes, or these blake,
I wole no mo ensamplis make,
And take therof his susteneng,
for therin ne lyth no begging;
But otherweyes not, ywis,
If Austyn gabbeth not of this.
And yit ful many a monk laboureth,
That God in holy chirche honoureth;
for whan hir swynking is agoon,
They rede and singe in chirche anon.

AND for ther hath ben greet discord,
As many a wight may bere record,
Upon the estate of mendience,
I wol shortly, in your presence,
Telle how a man may begge at nede,
That hath not wherwith him to fede,
Maugre his felones jangelinges,
for sothfastnesse wol non hidinges;
And yit, percas, I may abyey,
That I to yow sothly thus sey.

O, here the caas especial:
If a man be so bestial
That he of no craft hath science,
And nought desyreth ignorance,
Than may he go a/begging yerne,
Til he som maner craft can lerne,
Thurgh which, withoute trauaunding,
He may in trouthe have his living.
Or if he may don no labour,
for elde, or syknesse, or langour,
Or for his tendre age also,
Than may he yit a/begging go.

Rif he have, peraventure,
Thurgh usage of his noriture,
Lived over deliciously,
Than oughten good folk comunty
han of his mischeef som pitee,
And suffren him also, that he
May gon aboute and begge his breed,
That he be not for hungur deed.
Or if he have of craft cunning,
And strengthe also, and desiring
To wirken, as he hadde what,
But he finde neither this ne that,
Than may he begge, til that he
Have geten his necessitee.

Rif his winning be so lyte,
That his labour wol not acyute
Sufficiently al his living,
Yit may he go his breed begging;
fro dore to dore he may go trace,
Til he the remenaunt may purchase.
Or if a man wolde undirtake
Any empyse for to make,
In the rescous of our lay,
And it defenden as he may,

Be it with armes or lettrure,
Or other covenable cure,
If it be so he pore be,
Than may he begge, til that he
May finde in trouthe for to swinke,
And gete him clothes, mete, and drinke.
Swinke he with hondis corporel,
And not with hondis espirituel.

AT al these caas, and in semblables,
If that ther ben mo resonables,
He may begge, as I telle you here,
And elles nought, in no manere;
As William Seynt Amour wolde preche,
And ofte wolde dispute and teche
Of this matere alle openly
At Paris ful solempnely.
And also God my soule blesse,
As he had, in this stedfastnesse,
The accord of the universitee,
And of the puple, as semeth me.

O good man oughte it to refuse,
Ne oughte him therof to excuse,
Be wrooth or blythe whoso be;
for I wol speke, and telle it thee,
Al shulde I dye, and be put down,
As was Seynt Poull, in derk prisoun;
Or be exiled in this caas
With wrong, as maister William was,
That my moder Ypocrisye
Banished for hir greet envye.

MY moder flemed him, Seynt Amour:
This noble dide such labour
To susteyne ever the loyaltee,
That he to moche agylte me.
He made a book, and leet it wryte,
Wherin his lyf he dide al wryte,
And wolde ich reneyed begging,
And lived by my traveyng,
If I ne had rent ne other good.
What? wened he that I were wood?
for labour might me never plesse,
I have more wil to been at ese;
And have wel lever, sooth to sey,
Bifore the puple patre and prey,
And wrye me in my foxerye
Under a cope of papelardye.

GOD Love: What devel is this I here?
What wordis tellest thou me here?

fals/Seblant. What, sir?
Amour. falsnesse, that apert is;
Than dredist thou not God?

fals/Seblant.

O, certis:
For selde in greet thing shal he speke
In this world, that God wol drede.
for folk that hem to vertu yiven,
And truly on her owne liven,
And hem in goodnesse ay contene,
On hem is lifel thrift ysene;
Such folk drinken gret misese;
That lyf ne may me never plesse.
But see what gold han usurers,
And silver eek in hir garners,

Caylagiers, and these monyours,
Baillifs, bedels, provost, countours;
These liven wel nygh by ravyne;
The smale puple hem mote enclyne,
And they as wolves wol hem eten.
Upon the pore folk they geten
ful moche of that they spende or
sepe;

Nis none of hem that he nil strepe,
And wryen himself welatte fulle;
Withoute scalding they hem pulle.
The stronge the feble overgoth;
But I, that were my simple cloth,
Robbe bothe robbed and robours,
And gyle gyled and gylours.
By my treget, I gadre and threste
The greet tresour into my cheste,
That lyth with me so faste bounde.
Myn highe paleys do I founde,
And my delytes I fulfille

With wyne at feestes at my wille,
With tables fulle of entremees;
I wol no lyf, but ese and pees,
And winne gold to spende also.
for whan the grete bagge is go,
It cometh right with my japes.
Make I not wel tumble myn apes?
To winne is alwey myn entent;
My purchas is better than my rent;
for though I shulde beten be,
Oversal I entremete me;

Withoute me may no wight dure.
I walke soules for to cure.
Of al the worlde cure have I
In brede and lengthe; boldly
I wol bothe preche and eek counceilen;
With hondis wille I not traveilen,
for of the pope I have the bulle;
I ne holde not my wittes dulle.

I wol not stinten, in my lyve,
These emperouris for to shryve,
Or kyngis, dukis, and lordis grete;
But pore folk al quyte I lete.
I love no such shryving, pardee,
But it for other cause be.
I rekke not of pore men,
for astate is not worth an hen.
Where fyndest thou a swinker of labour
Have me unto his confessour?

But emperesses, and eek these countesses,
These quenes, and eek these countesses,
These abbesses, and eek Bigyns,
These grete ladyes palasyngs,
These joly knightes, and baillives,
These nonnes, and these burgeis wyves,
That riche been, and eek plesing,
And these maidens wel faring,
Wherso they clad or naked be,
Uncounceiled goth ther noon fro me.
And, for her soules savetee,
At lord and lady, and hir meynce,
Laxe, whan they hem to me shryve,

The propretee of al hir lyve,
And make hem trowe, bothe meest and
leest,
Hir paroch/prest nis but a beest
Ayens me and my company,
That shrewis been as greet as I;
for whiche I wol not hyde in hold
No privetee that me is told,
That I by word or signe, ywis,
Nil make hem knowe what it is,
And they wolen also tellen me;
They hele fro me no privetee.

And for to make yow hem perceyven,
That usen folk thus to disceyven,
I wol you seyn, withouten drede,
What men may in the gospel rede
Of Seynt Mathew, the gospelere,
That seith, as I shal you sey here.

AND the chaire of Moyses
Thus is it glosed, doutes:

That is the olde testament,
for therby is the chaire ment
Sittre Scribes and Pharisen;
That is to seyn, the cursid men
Whiche that we ypocritis calle
Doth that they preche, I rede you alle,
But doth not as they don a del,
That been not wery to seye wel,
But to do wel, no wille have they;
And they wolde binde on folk alwey,
That ben to be begyled able,
Burdens that ben importable;
On folkes shuldres thinges they
couchen
That they nil with her fingres touchen.

Amour.

AND why wol they not touche it?
fals/Seblant. Why?

for hem ne list not, sikirly;
for sadde burdens that men taken
Make folkes shuldres aken.
And if they do ought that good be,
That is for folk it shulde see:
for burdens larger maken they,
And make hir hemmes wyde alwey,
And loven setes at the table,
The firste and most honourable;
And for to han the first chaieris
In synagoges, to hem ful dere is;
And willen that folk hem loude and
grete,

Whan that they passen thurgh the strete,
And wolen be cleped Maister also.
But they ne shulde not willen so;
The gospel is therageyns, I gesse:
That sheweth wel hir wikkidnesse.
ANOTHER custom use we:
Of hem that wol ayens us be,
We hate hem deedly everichoon,
And we wol werrey hem, as oon.
Him that oon hatith, hate we alle,
And conjecte how to doon him falle.